

BRAZILLIANCE VOL. 2

A

Laurindo
ALMEIDA

S

Bud
HANK



CDP 7 96102 2

CDP 7 96102 2 LAURINDO ALMEIDA / BUD SHANK BRAZILLIANCE VOL. 2 WORLD PACIFIC®

1. SIMPATICO
(S. WILSON) (2:55)
2. RIO RHAPSODY
(ALMEIDA-GNATTALI) (3:38)
3. NOCTURNO
(L. ALMEIDA) (3:31)
4. LITTLE GIRL BLUE
(RODGERS-HART) (2:39)
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BUD SHANK ALTO SAXOPHONE, FLUTE
LAURINDO ALMEIDA GUITAR
GARY PEACOCK BASS
CHUCK FLORES DRUMS

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A BLUE NOTE LABEL

RECORDED IN LOS ANGELES IN MARCH 1958
 PRODUCED BY RICHARD BOCK
 RECORDING ENGINEER: DAYTON HOWE
 PRODUCED FOR RELEASE BY MICHAEL CUSCUNA
 DIGITAL TRANSFERS: RON McMASTER
 COVER PAINTING BY ROBERT IRWIN
 DESIGN: FRANKO CALIGIURI/INKWELL, INC.

1 - 10 ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON WORLD PACIFIC 1259 AS HOLIDAY IN BRAZIL
 # 11 - 20 ORIGINALLY RELEASED ON WORLD PACIFIC 1281 AS LATIN CONTRASTS



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When the Laurindo Almeida Quartet had finished recording the selections comprising the first volume of what has since been called the *Brazilliance* series, there was a natural desire on the part of the musicians to want to continue their collaboration in further live performing, particularly by taking the group on the road. The group, and the music it produced had earlier come about through happy accident. Late in 1952 veteran bassist Harry Babasin had been called to substitute for the regular bassist in guitarist Laurindo Almeida's trio, then performing at the 881 Club in Los Angeles. The guitarist was in the habit of performing several solo numbers during the course of the evening's work, and Babasin soon began joining him in the Brazilian choros Almeida played during these segments, adding a jazz pulsation to the dance rhythms of the traditional Brazilian sambas and baiaos.

The two enjoyed the duet-playing immensely, and soon after this Babasin invited the guitarist to join him, alto saxophonist Bud Shank and drummer Roy Harte in rehearsals at Harte's Drum City music store in Hollywood, the purpose of which was to see if they could bring about a fusion of the Brazilian baião rhythm and jazz—in Babasin's words, "a combination of samba rhythm and jazz, played with a free, light, loose feeling."

It took slightly more than a month of regular rehearsals for the desired fusion to take place, Harte recalled, following which the four began performing one night a week at The Haig, one of Los Angeles' leading jazz clubs, during which they tightened the group's performance skills and expanded its repertoire. The club's talent booker Richard Bock was, coincidentally, owner-operator of Pacific Jazz Records, which he had established less than a year earlier, and he soon invited them to undertake their first recordings. Consequently, in April of 1953, the Laurindo Almeida Quartet recorded, at two sessions a week apart, the 14 selections, plus one alternate, contained in *Brazilliance*, Volume 1. Following the release of the quartet's first album, its engagement at The Haig was terminated. Babasin, however, convinced that he, Shank, Harte and especially Almeida (who had devised the arrangements the group employed, as well as furnishing the bulk of its playing repertoire) had developed a worthwhile jazz offshoot, wanted to extend the quartet's activity to out-of-town bookings. But Almeida demurred, preferring to remain in Los Angeles and pursue the parallel careers of classical guitarist and studio musician. And so the experiments the four had engaged in went no further—at least at that time—

having resulted in several months of weekly playing at The Haig, and a pair of 10" Pacific Jazz LPs that were later combined into a single 12" album. *End of Brazilliance*, Chapter One.

The players went their separate ways. Almeida prospered in his dual career as concert guitarist and versatile, in-demand studio musician. Shank led a succession of groups as interest in what was then termed West Coast jazz accelerated, and he quickly became one of its leading younger lights, easily the music's foremost alto saxophonist (he won *Down Beat's* New Star alto award in 1954) and flautist as well. (His mentor, Art Pepper, was, of course, Shank's only serious rival on alto but was prevented from developing a sustained recording career and, hence, a loyal constituency of fans as a consequence of his narcotics addiction and the several terms of imprisonment that kept him off the scene through most of the 1950s, the period of Shank's ascendancy.)

There can be little doubt that along with trumpeter Chet Baker, Shank was one of the bulwarks of the Pacific Jazz Records roster of the decade, a dependably creative saxophonist whose fluent, warmly lyrical and gracefully rhythmic playing possessed broad popular appeal. Several years of big band experience in the late 1940s had culminated in a two-year stint with the celebrated Stan Kenton Orchestra at the beginning of the following decade during which Shank began to come into his own as a player thanks largely to his playing alongside Pepper, his section mate and the band's alto soloist, on a nightly basis all the time he was with Kenton. (While with Kenton, incidentally, Shank recorded his earliest flute solo, on *In Veradero*.)

Leaving the popular leader in the fall of 1951, Shank began a prolonged association with the Lighthouse All-Stars, one of the pivotal West Coast jazz performing units, in which he performed with Shorty Rogers, Jimmy Giuffre, Bob Cooper, Hampton Hawes, Howard Rumsey, Shelly Manne and others, as well as frequent performing and recording with Rogers, Gerry Mulligan, Manne, Maynard Ferguson, Chet Baker, Cooper, Giuffre, Pete Rugolo and many others. Beginning in the Spring of 1954 he commenced a long, fruitful association with Pacific Jazz Records which resulted in a steady stream of interesting, well-received albums under his leadership, among them those with the three trombonists Bob Enevoldsen, Stu Williamson and Maynard Ferguson (April and June, 1954); with Bob Brookmeyer and a small string ensemble (January and March, 1955); with Bill Perkins and Hampton Hawes (May, 1955); with Bob Cooper (January, 1956) and Russ Freeman (February, 1956), and from the

middle of the decade on with his own regular quartet, comprising pianist Claude Williamson, bassist Don Prell and drummer Chuck Flores, with whom he recorded (and toured) extensively for some years.

It was in the midst of his regular recording activities for the label that in March of 1958 Shank was reunited with Almeida for an additional series of recordings in the original saxophone-acoustic guitar format of five years earlier. Critically acclaimed from the time of their initial release in 1953, the Almeida-Shank collaborations had so firmly established themselves among the classic, enduringly popular recordings in the Pacific Jazz catalog, remaining continuously in print, that the label's Richard Bock determined to have the altoist and guitarist undertake further recordings in that vein. Fortunately for us, both principals were available and willing to record, and rehearsals commenced at the altoist's home. The gifted young bassist Gary Peacock and Shank's regular drummer Chuck Flores completed the lineup, providing impeccable, hugely sympathetic rhythmic support, allowing the music to take wing.

As in the earlier collaboration, the guitarist served as primary arranger for the group's music, or at least as final arbiter of what was collectively devised as its approach to a song. One does not have to have great familiarity with the music to discern that there is a much greater improvisatory character to the 1958 recordings than was the case with those of five years earlier, which relied much more fully on planned, carefully constructed settings of the song materials, several of those earlier works having been completely written out by the guitarist as a means of realizing his intent. In these later recordings, however, the approach the group followed was much less structured and permitted more in the way of extended improvising by Shank and, in general, a more definite jazz atmosphere, largely as a result of the strong rhythm work of Peacock and Flores.

As Shank explained of the procedures followed in planning these recordings, Almeida generally prepared a one-chorus lead sheet on which was written the melody of the song with the underlying harmonic structure indicated by chord symbols, plus a written figure for the bassist to follow. Rehearsals took place several times a week at which were developed the actual arrangements and playing formats for each of the songs; most were of the "head arrangement" type—loose, simple, functional, making allowance for spontaneous elaboration in the heat of performance—while several others, *Rio Rhapsody* and *Little Girl Blue*, for examples, were fully planned. With the exception of Shank's solo, the former was completely

written, while the latter left nothing to chance in Almeida's completely detailed orchestration.

In addition, there's much less reliance on traditional Brazilian song materials than there was in the pair's original collaboration. Here, in addition to the more or less standard fare—the two Rodgers and Hart compositions, *Little Girl Blue* and *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*; Thelonius Monk's sempiternal *'Round Midnight*; Stanley Wilson's *Simpatico*; Dmitri Tiomkin and Paul Francis Webster's *Blowin' Wild*, and George Gershwin's *Prelude* (which in Almeida's fetching arrangement maintains constant contrapuntal movement through its thematic exposition and Shank's flute solo)—each of the two principals contributes original compositions, the guitarist nine, Shank four, and collaborated on one, the touching *Lonely*.

So, while never moving very far from the impulses that set the recordings in motion, these later ones are subtly, yet appreciably different in character. They are more properly true collaborations than were the earlier experiments, alluding to and perhaps even paying homage to them but never being slavish about it. For one thing, the performances are much less firmly rooted in traditional Brazilian music and the principals themselves less determinedly "authentic" in how they go about performing it. It's almost as though they had learned from their earlier collaborations that the two musics—Brazilian samba and jazz—could be brought into fruitful, mutually stimulating alignment and, having learned so, here let their imaginations loose, unencumbered by any thought of experimenting, fusing or bringing about anything other than captivating, enjoyable music, the best that their hearts and minds could devise. They did that in happy abundance. Shank in particular plays with great assurance, commanding authority and assertiveness, the result of his sustained artistic growth and increasing powers as a player of substance over the preceding five years. And it is this, I feel, that more than anything else accounts for the emphatic differences between the two groupings of *Brazilliance* recordings. Neither is better, I hasten to point out, only different, and it is those differences no less than the shared similarities and continuities that continue to compel our attention and our admiration. Vive le difference!

—Pete Welding

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LAURINDO ALMEIDA GUITAR
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1) ~~XXXX~~ 1/2

2) ~~XXXXX~~ Peacock!

3) ~~XXXXX~~ 1/2

4) ~~XXXX~~

5) ~~XXX~~

6) ~~XXXXX~~ Best

thing so far.

Church Flowers 5-star!

Hute!!

7) ~~XXXXXX~~

8) ~~XXXXXX~~

wonderful close

9)

LAURINDO ALMEIDA
BUD SHANK

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